

Strategic Plan FY 2009-2011

In the course of a day, an employee or visitor to the NIH is bound to experience one or more services managed by the ORS, whether it is security as you enter the campus, the parking garage where you park your car or the cafeteria where you order a meal. **The ORS also provides many services**directly to the NIH scientific community, such as radiation safety and training, a centralized animal care program and occupational health and safety services.



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DIRECTOR'S FORWARD

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) is the primary Federal agency for conducting and supporting medical research. At the forefront of research, the NIH focuses on current and emerging public health needs and promising areas of science. The NIH makes medical breakthroughs happen to improve people's health and save lives. The Office of Research Services (ORS), as part of the Office of Management (OM), supports the NIH in a wide variety of ways that are necessary for the efficient and safe operation of the largest biomedical research facility in the world.

The services we provide impact, both directly and indirectly, all of the organizations and people across the entire NIH. As the NIH is much like a small town with its own police and fire departments, library, mail facilities, and research support services, the role of the ORS is similar to that of the office of the city manager. In the course of a day, an employee or visitor to the NIH is bound to experience one or more services managed by the ORS, whether it is security as you enter the campus, the parking garage where you park your car or the cafeteria where you order a meal. The ORS also provides many services directly to the NIH scientific community, such as radiation safety and training, a centralized animal care program and occupational health and safety services.

The ORS was established in 1979 and over the years has progressed from a small office that provided limited services to an organization that provides over 100 discrete services and employs more than 1,600 people. The ORS looks very different today as compared to its beginnings in 1979. This factor, coupled with a rapidly changing environment and increasingly limited resources, challenged the ORS to think afresh how we conduct business. Recognizing the need to evolve our services, as well as service delivery, leadership initiated an ORS-wide strategic planning process.

For the past year the ORS has been engaged in a thoughtful assessment process, asking some fundamental questions—who are we, what do we want to be, how can we achieve our goals, and how will we know when we have succeeded? We have re-examined and refined the organization's mission, vision, core values, and foundational concepts. We have listened to our stakeholders. We have reflected on our individual and collective commitments and practices.

I am now pleased to present the ORS Strategic Plan, which will guide our work in effectively carrying out our roles and responsibilities aimed at providing responsive and dependable support to the NIH research mission. Creating a shared vision and working to accomplish a common mission moves us forward together, beyond simply the sum of what any one of us can accomplish alone. The development of this plan has reinforced our belief in both the strength each employee brings to the ORS and the critical role of



collaboration. It is in these internal and external relationships that our defined values are most critical. Core values echo what we as individuals embrace when working together and with our customers.

The ORS strategic plan serves as a broad roadmap and is intended to be a dynamic and integrated effort. The overarching goals, which each employee will help achieve, provide a balanced framework of what needs to be done by us to reach our vision and fulfill our mission. To achieve the full potential of this plan, every office, division, and program within ORS must use the plan to help guide their work. While some initiatives will be undertaken ORS-wide, many others will rest with the dedicated individuals throughout ORS who strive to improve organizational performance every day.

I look forward to working together to implement our plan.

/s/ Alfred C. Johnson, Ph.D.

Director, Office of Research Services

ORS

MISSION STATEMENT

The ORS provides responsive and dependable support to the NIH research mission by planning, directing and delivering scientific and regulatory activities, public safety, security, and services to enrich the NIH community.

VISION STATEMENT

The ORS is an organization that seamlessly delivers on its mission, the first time and every time, exceeding expectations and evolving with changing requirements. We are the standard by which similar service providers are measured.

CORE VALUES

Customer Focus

We exist to serve and protect our customers. We deliver equitable, reliable and trustworthy products and services that are responsive to customer needs and respect the customer's point of view.

Excellence

We are committed to providing quality services and products to aid NIH in achieving its mission. We demonstrate this commitment by our expertise, helpfulness, respect for the needs of customers, recognition of the value of cooperation and teamwork, and sense of responsibility toward our work.

Integrity

We set high expectations and ethical standards for fiscal responsibility, personal performance and in the provision of services, resources and products.

Collaboration

We are committed to partnering with the NIH community to achieve a shared appreciation of mutual needs, values, expectations, constraints, roles/responsibilities, and outcomes; and to sustain the best research and work environments possible.





Providing Financial Stewardship

Goal: Provide financial stewardship across the ORS to ensure the appropriate use of all resources and maintain financial integrity while providing efficient and effective services and products that further the NIH's ability to meet its mission.

The Office of Research Services is entrusted by the NIH with an approved funding level to provide quality services and products. It is essential that the ORS provide financial stewardship to ensure that the funds provided by the NIH are used for the purposes requested; obligations and expenditures do not exceed the funding authorities provided; and transparency is maintained throughout the budget formulation and execution process.

STRATEGIC OUTCOMES

Each ORS service is financially solvent, regardless of fund type

ORS employs a methodology for reviewing services to ensure future solvency

ORS budget formulation and execution process is transparent

OBJECTIVES

- **1.1** Define the service level, the method of identifying services, the period of review for the solvency test, and candidates for study
- **1.2** Perform study
- **1.3** Implement recommendations
- **1.4** Monitor, document, and communicate results

GOAL: Providing Financial Stewardship

OBJECTIVE 1.1

Define the service level, the method of identifying services, the period of review for the solvency test, and candidates for study

DESCRIPTION OF OBJECTIVE

The appropriate service level at which the solvency test will be performed will be defined. The proposed levels for each of the three fund types are as follows:

- Management Fund: Division/Office Level
- Assessments: Dependent on basis of assessment
- Fee for Service: Activities with rate structures.

A set of screening criteria will be used to identify those services that would be subject to further analysis/review to determine financial solvency. In addition, the period of review for which financial solvency will be determined will be identified.

THIS OBJECTIVE WILL ENSURE THAT:

• ORS services are reviewed for solvency in a transparent, consistent, and timely manner.

OBJECTIVE 1.2

Perform study

DESCRIPTION OF OBJECTIVE

The appropriate financial solvency study will be performed. Study report will be used to communicate recommendations to achieve financial solvency as well as to obtain approval to implement those recommendations.

- Services identified for further review will have an appropriate study performed and recommendations will be developed.
- * Study Milestones TBD based on requirements and complexity of particular study.

OBJECTIVE 1.3 OBJECTIVE 1.4

Implement recommendations

DESCRIPTION OF OBJECTIVE

Plans for implementing approved recommendations will be developed.

Recommendations will be incorporated into the budget process as appropriate.

THIS OBJECTIVE WILL ENSURE THAT:

- Approved recommendations are implemented and incorporated into the budget process to ensure the solvency of the organization.
- * Milestones TBD, dependent upon completion of the study, complexity of the study, and recommendations.

Monitor, document, and communicate results

DESCRIPTION OF OBJECTIVE

Impact of implemented recommendations will be monitored, and overall effects on financial solvency will be documented and communicated to leadership.

- The implemented recommendations were effective in achieving solvency or to identify further action.
- *Milestones occur post-implementation of recommendations.



Source material: The Office of Human Resources, NIH. Prep Workforce Management and Planning Brand November 2009

Information sharing session on the NIH
Performance Management Appraisal Program
conducted by the Workforce Management
and Planning Branch.





Improving Human Capital Planning and Management

Goal: Recruit, hire, develop and deploy a talented and diverse workforce that has the competencies to successfully achieve the ORS mission and goals.

To successfully serve the NIH community, it is critical that ORS attract world class talent and establish a systematic way to enhance staff growth and development. Once hired, ORS must then develop and maintain a positive work environment to retain that workforce. To improve workforce planning and management, ORS will expand outreach and recruitment efforts in order to hire the strongest candidates; assist employees in obtaining the fundamental competencies and knowledge they need to perform their jobs; and establish a leadership development program that will enable current staff to fill leadership positions. A well-supported and developed staff, equipped with the right tools, translates into a workforce capable of achieving management's goals and those of the NIH as a whole.

STRATEGIC OUTCOMES

ORS recruits and retains a highly qualified and diverse workforce

ORS meets mandated OHR standards for recruitment

OBJECTIVES

- **2.1** Improve human capital recruitment success and shorten timeframes to fill positions
- **2.2** Retain the best individuals by offering meaningful and challenging career development opportunities, thus reducing the turnover rates in critical occupational series
- **2.3** Expand succession planning such that key positions have a sustained pool of leadership candidates

GOAL: Improving Human Capital Planning and Management

OBJECTIVE 2.1

Improve recruitment success and shorten timeframes to fill positions

DESCRIPTION OF OBJECTIVE

ORS will expand the use of recruitment strategies and techniques. ORS will:

- Include recruitment and relocation incentives as appropriate.
- Develop new or innovative linkages and outreach to professional organizations and societies, colleges and universities, military transition or veterans centers, and state unemployment offices.
- Hire permanent FTEs over 'term' FTEs or contractors whenever possible.
- Evaluate places where recruitment has been successful in the past.
- Utilize 'open continuous' announcements when feasible.
- Utilize paid advertisement strategies in addition to posting vacancies on USA Jobs.
- Include ORS core values in vacancy announcements.

This objective provides an opportunity to measure the effectiveness of USAJOBS vacancy announcements against paid advertisements. The objective also proposes innovative and flexible solutions to improve recruitment such as: 'Above the Minimum' and 'Annual Leave Credit for Non-Federal Experience', Direct Hire Authority, Student Loan Repayment Plans and the use of the Title 42 excepted appointment route for scientific positions. To shorten timeframes to fill positions, schedule QRBs (Quality Review Boards) in advance so referrals for interviews, and the interviews themselves, can be made in a timely manner. Encourage QRB use of behavior-based and open ended questions in the interview process and to check references very carefully.

- All possible incentives and options are explored, documented and made available to management prior to the actual recruitment effort. Staff are available to explain options and assist with hiring qualified candidates.
- Steps are taken to shorten or streamline the hiring process.



OBJECTIVE 2.2

OBJECTIVE 2.3

Retain the best individuals by offering meaningful and challenging career opportunities, thus reducing the turnover rates in targeted occupational series

Expand succession planning efforts such that targeted positions have a sustained pool of leadership candidates

DESCRIPTION OF OBJECTIVE

Establish a meaningful incentive plan that enables mid level and senior management to retain a highly qualified and diverse workforce.

THIS OBJECTIVE WILL ENSURE THAT:

New employees feel welcome and part of the NIH team beginning with their first day at NIH. A sense of ownership in the work enterprise becomes a foundation for career longevity and should decrease the number and frequency of vacancies.

DESCRIPTION OF OBJECTIVE

ORS shall establish a leadership development program that will enable current staff to become our future leaders.

- ORS has qualified and skilled candidates readily available to backfill vacancies.
- ORS has a mechanism and plan for transferring "knowledge" during recruitment and separation.







Improving the Accessibility of Education and Training

Goal: Implement an inclusive ORS training inventory and an ORS training site that captures internal and external training data to improve business operations and provide better customer service.

All ORS employees deserve timely, high quality training opportunities. This goal directly supports ORS core values to "strive to provide excellent service to the NIH community" through customer focus and excellence. For NIH to continue as a renowned and respected research institution, it is critical that its employees receive the best training available. This goal will establish a mechanism to inventory and document ORS training assets; track training records including internal, external and professional development courses; and integrate ORS training assets with the HHS Learning Management System (LMS). If ORS properly trains its employees through an efficient, effective, high quality education and training system, the organization will be better able to fulfill its mission as well as carry out administrative functions.

STRATEGIC OUTCOMES

All applicable ORS training records are accessible to employees and supervisors

Training is offered to employees in a timely manner

All ORS training assets will be inventoried, classified and centrally located

ORS training is integrated and/or interfaced through the HHS LMS

OBJECTIVES

- **3.1** Inventory and document training assets, including internal, external and professional development training for ORS users
- **3.2** Improve data integrity, consistency and quality to allow for consistent understanding of training assets available to ORS users
- **3.3** Improve accessibility and accountability of tracking ORS users' educational and training courses
- **3.4** Strengthen the education and training of all ORS users through the use of an inclusive ORS training site
- **3.5** Identify training assets that are available for upload to HHS LMS system
- **3.6** Classify the format of each training asset and determine compatibility with HHS LMS system
- **3.7** Identify the costs of transferring various training assets to HHS LMS system
- **3.8** Conduct cost/benefit analysis of transferring training assets to HHS LMS system
- **3.9** Establish a communications coordination function that will enhance the quality and timeliness of ORS users completing training requirements

GOAL: Improving the Accessibility of Education and Training

OBJECTIVE 3.1

Inventory and document training assets, including internal, external and professional development training for ORS users

DESCRIPTION OF OBJECTIVE

Identify all training assets to be available on the inclusive ORS website.

Historically, ORS has disbursed training programs throughout its thirty Service Groups. The decentralized approach meant employees would have to search and identify training programs applicable to their position. They would then have to contact each Service Group to obtain the training. To ensure that employees complete mandatory training and obtain the career development they deserve, existing internal and external training assets need to be identified.

THIS OBJECTIVE WILL ENSURE THAT:

- All ORS training assets will be identified and documented.
- ORS training assets will be classified and organized based upon the training content.

OBJECTIVE 3.2

Improve data integrity, consistency and quality to allow for a clear understanding of training assets available to ORS users

DESCRIPTION OF OBJECTIVE

Collection of accurate and reliable data for ORS

ORS Service Groups have independent training systems that capture important ORS employee data. However, the data collected is not consistent across Service Groups. The security of the data varies from training system to training system. Integrating the existing ORS training assets into the HHS LMS system will enhance data integrity and data security. ORS leaders will have the ability to track their employees' training performance easily though the HHS LMS system.

THIS OBJECTIVE WILL ENSURE THAT:

• ORS training data is integrated with the HHSLMS.



OBJECTIVE 3.3 – 3.4

Improve accessibility and accountability of tracking ORS users' educational and training courses and strengthen the educational capabilities of all ORS users through use of an inclusive ORS training site

DESCRIPTION OF OBJECTIVE

This objective seeks to establish and maintain an ORS training website that is designed to:

- Improve accessibility for ORS users;
- Improve accountability of data collected; and
- Provide senior leadership with consistent training information of their ORS employees.

NIH has traditionally relied upon a patchwork of training programs that are accessed through the agency's numerous divisions (laboratory safety training, radiation safety training, CPR training, fire safety, etc.). The increasing number of individual training assets has fostered an increasing need for systems integration.

ORS has operated under the principle of identifying and implementing training assets in response to particular business and safety and health drivers. This has resulted in multiple training systems complete with websites, databases, registration methods, etc. to address one major need area. Many of these systems cannot share data. Integrated systems provide immediate and long term functionality and flexibility to serve an organization's current and future training requirements.

Establishing a website on the ORS network will centralize training and provide quick access to the training programs ORS employees need.

THIS OBJECTIVE WILL ENSURE THAT:

• ORS users can obtain their training information at one location.

GOAL: Improving the Accessibility of Education and Training

OBJECTIVE 3.5 3.6

Identify training assets that are available for upload to the HHS LMS system, classify the format of each training asset and determine compatibility with HHS LMS system

DESCRIPTION OF OBJECTIVE

This objective seeks to ensure a smooth transition from current ORS training systems to the HHS LMS system.

There are multiple ORS training assets that are available online. These training assets have been developed by assorted NIH entities and independent contractors. The infrastructure and format behind each training asset may be complicated. Each training asset's infrastructure needs to be analyzed and classified to determine if the training asset is compatible with the HHS LMS system. This information will be integrated into the existing HHS LMS system to improve the integrity, accessibility and accountability for ORS users.

- ORS training assets are available on the HHS LMS system.
- A strong partnership between ORS and HHS LMS is established.



Food sanitation training and inspection conducted by the Division of Occupational Health and Safety.



OBJECTIVE 3.7 – 3.8

OBJECTIVE 3.9

Identify the costs associated with transferring various training assets to the HHS LMS system and conduct cost/ benefit analyses of transferring these assets to the HHS LMS system

coordination function that will seek to enhance the quality and timeliness of ORS users completing training requirements

Establish a communications

DESCRIPTION OF OBJECTIVE

This objective seeks to ensure that an inclusive training inventory and an ORS training website can be developed and launched through cost-effective methods and rational decision-making.

The ORS training assets and their varying structures are complex. Transferring the training assets to the HHS LMS system is a task that requires significant time and financial resources from multiple HHS/NIH offices. By identifying costs and conducting a cost benefit analysis, decision makers can evaluate the potential outcomes and select technologies and solutions to achieve these outcomes.

THIS OBJECTIVE WILL ENSURE THAT:

- Resources obtained to achieve an ORS training inventory and training website is affordable.
- The ORS training inventory and training website is economical, practical and worthwhile.

DESCRIPTION OF OBJECTIVE

This objective seeks to enhance the structure for internal communications between ORS Service Groups and the Education and Training Initiative so that the transition to an integrated training system is smooth. The training system will succeed with the full support of the ORS Service Groups. The ORS Service Groups need to be educated about the new integrated training system, the training database, the ORS website and the HHS LMS system. For ORS to provide better customer service and improve business operations, the ORS leaders and users will be encouraged to utilize the services developed by the Education and Training Initiative.

- Cooperation exists amongst all ORS Service Groups and the Education and Training Initiative.
- The ORS training inventory, ORS training website and the HHS LMS system are being used by all ORS users.
- Training requirements and deadlines will be completed by ORS users.





Enhancing Communication and Collaboration with Stakeholders

Goal: Implement an enhanced communication strategy that increases awareness of what ORS does and provides accurate and timely information to stakeholders and ensures productive relationships with our partners.

The services that the ORS provides impact, both directly and indirectly, all of the organizations across the NIH. As a key service provider for NIH, ORS must understand the needs and expectations of our partners, customers (internal and external) and stakeholders. For ORS to be successful in the eyes of its customers and stakeholders, we must improve communication and outreach at all levels. To achieve this goal, ORS will focus communication and outreach efforts on building a unified understanding of our mission, creating visibility and promoting image, maintaining clear and consistent messages, and developing productive and reciprocal partnerships. Our strategy will promote community involvement, improve customer service, build trust, and increase stakeholder awareness of who we are, what we do, and how our services benefit the NIH as a whole.

STRATEGIC OUTCOMES

ORS creates a viable and sustainable communication plan employing enhanced tools to reach ORS customers and partners

ORS communicates effectively with its stakeholders

ORS connects and collaborates consistently with the NIH community

OBJECTIVES

- **4.1** Develop and implement a communications plan to support the ORS image and to improve awareness and understanding of the ORS mission
- **4.2** Enhance the effectiveness, efficiency and timeliness of internal and external information flow to improve two-way exchange between and within the ORS, OD and the ICs
- **4.3** Develop and implement a voluntary, collaborative agreement with the Office of Research Facilities (ORF) and other partners that allows participants to work together to achieve a common goal and to share risks and responsibilities

GOAL: Enhancing Communication and Collaboration with Stakeholders

OBJECTIVE 4.1

Develop and implement a communications plan to support the ORS image and to improve awareness and understanding of the ORS mission

DESCRIPTION OF OBJECTIVE

The ORS conducts outreach in many forms; however, efforts are not unified. They are administered on a programmatic basis to meet the individual needs of the myriad of services provided. This decentralized approach does not engender a full understanding of ORS as an organization and what ORS offers compared to other NIH central service providers. In order for our communication and outreach efforts to be more effective, the ORS will centralize its efforts under a single program that uses consistent branding and messaging. Obtaining and maintaining the support of our customers by proactively responding to community needs and concerns will be an integral part of our communication efforts. This approach will ensure the ORS is perceived as a reliable source of information. Operating in a transparent manner will also enhance goodwill and trust in the ORS.

- Customers and stakeholders have a clear understanding of who we are, what we do and how we benefit the NIH community.
- Clear and consistent repeated messages are used to improve information flow and gain recognition and support for the ORS.
- Messages are linked with the ORS, OM and NIH mission and build on the positive work of the programs to enhance perception and gain trust.
- Visual elements contained in communication and outreach strategies utilize a standardized design that establishes identity and improves image.
- Programs are driven by customer input, stakeholder needs and accepted business practices.



OBJECTIVE 4.2

Enhance the effectiveness, efficiency and timeliness of internal and external information flow to improve two-way exchange within the ORS and between the ORS, OD and the ICs

DESCRIPTION OF OBJECTIVE

Our employees and customers are the foundation for the success of the ORS. This objective will support the ability of the ORS to effectively market our diverse services and programs in support of the OM and the NIH mission. An efficient communication strategy will achieve open and effective information flow between internal staff, external partners, stakeholders, and customers. An open flow of communication will foster information exchange, enhance ORS credibility and create opportunities for improvement.

- ORS is proactive rather than reactive and that it manages issues and actions.
- ORS establish business rules for triaging communications and data requests.
- Staff are easily accessible to our customers with up-to-date email addresses and contact information.
- Each Program Area establishes a Mailing List or Listserv to contact and distribute current information to stakeholders.

- There are at least 24 program or activityspecific ORS Branded Bulletins/Newsletters/ Global distributions per year highlighting and/ or promoting ORS services.
- Print media are relevant and designed to catch the attention of our customers.
- ORS embraces electronic tools and technology (social media) where cost-effective and appropriate.
- The website is up-to-date and is reviewed four times annually.
- Upcoming events are posted on the ORS Home Page.



The ORS Director, Administrative Training Committee Leadership and ORS Immersion Program staff with NIH Fellows and Interns participating in a "get to know ORS" immersion program.

GOAL: Enhancing Communication and Collaboration with Stakeholders

OBJECTIVE 4.3

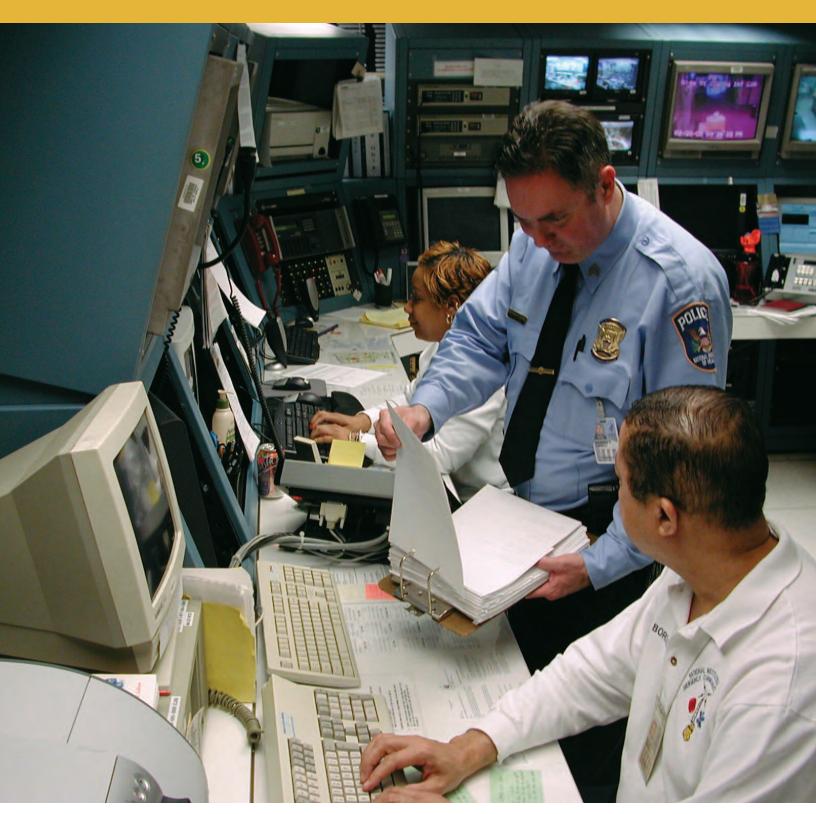
Develop and implement a voluntary, collaborative agreement with the Office of Research Facilities (ORF) and other partners that allows participants to work together to achieve a common goal and to share risks and responsibilities

DESCRIPTION OF OBJECTIVE

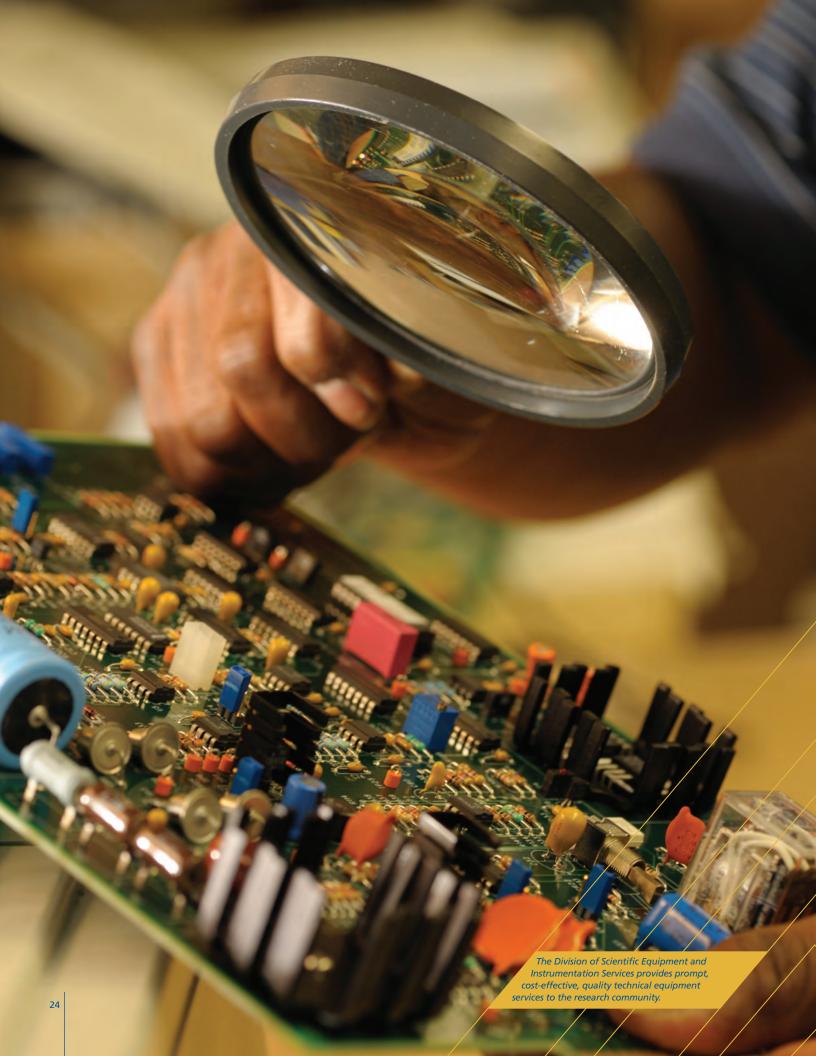
A brieflook at the history of the ORS reveals that its role as an NIH service center has been consistent. while its scope and organizational structure has been constantly changing. Between 2001 and 2003 an unprecedented number of changes took place within the ORS that substantially impacted the organization and created customer confusion that still exists within the greater NIH community. For example, the facilities management functions that originally fell within the ORS were consolidated and moved into a new organization, the Office of Research Facilities (ORF). While officially considered two separate organizations, the ORS continues to provide ORF with much of its administrative support and many of the services provided by both organizations remain interdependent. Therefore, to achieve mutual goals and objectives, and to further stewardship, it is imperative that the ORS partner with ORF to improve service delivery and performance. The ORS also interacts daily with many other NIH

components, including the Clinical Center, the Center for Information Technology, other Central Service Providers, and many of the Institutes. Creating successful and enduring "customer" partnerships with these organizations will enable the ORS to direct our resources and capabilities to the programs and services most relevant to the community, thereby advancing the ORS, OM and NIH mission.

- Shared goals are indentified to leverage assets (resources, capabilities, expertise).
- ORS can adapt to changing requirements and environments.
- All interdependent services are clearly defined in order to:
 - » identify the lead or primary Office responsible for the delivery of the service;
 - » identify inefficiencies and develop action plans to minimize;
 - » improve coordination and service delivery; and
 - » reduce confusion for NIH customers.



The ORS Emergency Communications Center- which operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week -ensures the safety and security of the NIH workforce, patients and visitors and the protection of NIH's research and knowledge assets.



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